Japanese Fairy Tale Series No. 19.

The OGRES of OYEYAMA.

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THE Great Warrior Raikō had received orders from the Mikado to punish the ogres who lived in Oyeyama, and to rescue from their clutches the captives they had seized and carried off to their stronghold. For in those days there was hardly a family in Kyoto which had not to mourn the loss of one or more of its members.

No one had as yet had courage

to make an attack upon the ogres' castle. Watanabe Tsuna, one of Raikō's followers, had indeed lain in wait for Shutendōji the chief of the ogres, at the Gate called Rashōmon, in Kyoto. There a famous struggle had taken place in which, though the ogre escaped him, Tsuna had cut off, and carried away in triumph the monster's arm. Shutendoji, however, by means of a clever trick, got back his arm again; and he, and his horrible crew, from this time forward, became bolder and bolder, until at last the whole city was filled with terror and mourning.

Raikō was delighted to receive

the Mikado's order. Indeed, this was all he had been waiting for, as he and his band had long vowed the destruction of the ogres.

Raiko then, with Tsuna and his other followers prepared for their journey. Well armed, and with their good swords in their belts, this brave little band, consisting of but five warriors, set off towards the mountain still known as the "Ogres' Hill," at the top of which they expected to find the monster's den. But the path was rough, if not indeed actually dangerous, and often they lost traces of it altogether, while the thick trees prevented their seeing any distance before them.

At length their difficulties increased so much that they were at a loss which way to turn, when there suddenly appeared in front of them an old man of mild and venerable aspect. His long and snow-white beard flowed down over his rich garment, while his countenance beamed with heavenly radiance like a bright spring morning. Raiko bowed low; and addressing himself to the old man, asked him if they were in the right way to the Ogres' Mountain. "What would you seek there, my son?" demanded the old man in his turn.

Then Raiko took out a little bo
of rich gold brocade, and from
drew the Mikado's order, clearl
written in large letters. "I command
you, Raiko to punish the ogres
When the old man had read th
order he spoke thus to Raiko. "M
son, only in one way can you hop
to fulfil this command. Your sword
are powerless against these monster
and if you trust to them alone
you will soon be dead men. Shu
tendoji, as his name truly signifie
only lives to eat and, above all, t
drink. Through his love of win
shall you overcome him. Follow me
So saying the old man led th

rriors to his dwelling on the hill
le, and after he had set food before
em, and they had refreshed them-

selves, he brought out these gifts. For Raiko a helmet which was proof against every weapon, a magic sword and a drinking flagon or goblet.

his flagon had two mouths, and as so cunningly contrived that, ough to outward appearance it as one vessel; yet, by means of secret division, it could be made contain two separate and dis- ct liquors. Besides, he disguised e warriors in the garments of *amabushi*, or mountain hermits, the owing robes quite concealing the rmour and weapons which they ll wore beneath. Added to this, the old man gave to Raiko some of the famous wine of Sakai, and a small white powder, which was in truth a most powerful sleeping drug. Then he gave them full directions

as to the path they should follow and also as to their behaviour when they should have gained admittance into the ogres' castle. "Go, my sons, and may heaven prosper you," said the old man as they bade him a grateful farewell.

Thus equipped, and filled with new courage, the little band set out once more. As they journeyed, they talked to each other of the kindness and wisdom of the old man from whom they had just parted. And as they talked, a sudden light seemed to burst upon them, and they with one voice exclaimed. "This was no mere mortal: the gods themselves have come to our help." So saying, they turned round, and bowed their faces to the ground, worshipping. Over mountain and through glen they took their way. Fording the streams, for bridges there were none, and climbing steep precipices, aided often by the rope-like stems of the wild wistaria.

After a hard day's march, they came, towards evening to the foot of a thickly wooded hill. There they met with a beautiful maiden engaged in washing blood stained garments in the mountain torrent, which here flowed more quietly through the valley. The warriors in surprise

asked her what she did alon
in this desolate spot. "Alas sirs,
she answered, "I am a captive, an
am obliged to do the bidding of m
masters, the ogres. Fly, I beseec

ou, while yet there is time, from
is haunted spot." "No indeed,"
id Raiko, "we have come on
rpose to find the ogres' den.
fore morning you shall be free."

So leaving the maid in astonish-
ment, they began to climb the
mountain. They had not gone far
when they met a young ogre, who
was cook to Shutendoji. What was
the horror of the warriors to find
that he was carrying home part of
a human body, which he meant to
cook for the ogres' supper. Indeed, all
around, lay human bones, bleaching
in the sun, which had been flung
down the precipice from the ogres'
kitchen! Hiding his disgust as well as
he could, Raiko bade the ogre good
evening, and asked him politely if
he and his friends could find shelter
for the night in his master's castle.

"We are poor mountain priests," said Raiko, travelling to Kyoto, and have lost our way. As it is now near sunset, and we are both faint and weary, we hope your master will not send us away." The young ogre readily agreed to state their case to Shutendoji, thinking all the time to himself "what a fine feast we shall have off these fat old priests!" And now they came in sight of the castle. Dark and gloomy it looked, among tall pine trees, and giant rocks of weird and curious shape. The demon cook begged the pretended priests to wait at the

gate while he learned his maste
pleasure concerning them, but so
returning, led them into the pr
sence of Shutendoji himself.

The monster was seated at t

per end of a long hall. Around
were soft cushions, and silken
tains, and scattered about lay
nking cups and bottles. But
o can describe the horrible
pect of the ogre, as he reclined
a golden arm rest? With his red
ly, hideous features and copper-
loured horns, he was enough to
rike terror into the boldest heart.
utendoji however, received the
retended priests with much condes-
nsion, and invited them to sup
nd spend the evening with him.
he supper was soon brought in
y attendant ogres, and consisted
ainly of animals' heads, and human

bones, though there was also a di
or two of wild boar and other gam

Raiko and his comrades we
almost sick with the sight, yet dar
not refuse to partake of this ghast
feast. The ogre and his lords we
too busy with their own mea
which they devoured ravenously, t
notice that their guests did no mo
than feign to eat, and in realit
left the disgusting morsels untaste
All this time wine had bee
flowing like water; indeed there w
a large tub of it standing nea
from which smaller vessels wer
constantly being filled. Some o
these vessels frightful to tell, wer

uman skulls, and were handed
the ogres by captive maidens
hom they forced to wait upon
em. When Raiko saw that Shu-
ndoji had drunk a great deal, and
at the fun was becoming fast and
rious, he thought that now was
time to act. So stepping for-
ard, he offered to show them the
Kyoto dance" for which he was
mous. He danced so well, and
ndled his fan with so much grace
at the drunken ogres screamed
ith delight, making the hall echo
gain to their shouts.

Then producing the double drink-
ng stoup Raiko offered it to Shu-

tendoji, assuring him that it contained some of the finest Sakai wine. Raiko had before this taken an opportunity of filling both compartments of the stoup with wine, but into one of them he had cunningly dropped the white powder. This side of the flagon he took care should always be presented to the ogre and his lords, while he and his followers carefully drank out of the other. Shutendoji loudly praised the wine, and was not content until he had drained the last drop. Though he had allowed the other ogres to have a sip, yet he had drunk the lion's share himself, so that he was soon

asleep, and snoring like the sou
of distant thunder, and before lo
most of his retainers had follow
his example.

Then up rose Raiko and gave t
signal to his comrades. Drawi
their swords they soon made sh
work of the sleeping ogres, wh
Raiko came near to Shutendoji wie
ing the magic sword, the gift of t
gods. As he raised his hands
strike, the blade lengthened of
own accord, and with one blow t
monster's head was severed from h
body. In a moment the hideous he
flew up into the air; the mou
opening and shutting, the tee

grinding, the eyes rolling, and the horns springing out to an appalling length. Seven times it whirled round, and then made a dash at Raiko's head. And it would have fared badly with the hero, but for the armour by which he was protected. The demon's teeth bit through the hat, but were powerless against the helmet. The head fell at length to the ground with a heavy thud, and the victory was won. After they had slain the ogres, Raiko and his brave comrades, released the captives, divided the spoil, and finally set fire to the castle, destroying at once, and for ever that abode of wickedness.

Then the brave warriors, followed by the rejoicing band of released captives, gladly took their way home, bearing the head of Shutendoji with them. But before leaving the Ogres' Hill they reverently buried the bones of former victims, and set up a stone to mark the spot. Raiko received honours and rewards from the Mikado, and the everlasting gratitude of the citizens of Kyoto, whom he had thus delivered from the raids of the ogres.